



TA'LEEMI
DEPARTMENT

MASJID & MAKTAB CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

UPDATED EDITION 2022

HADITH - I

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ."

Abdullah bin Umar (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: **"Those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you."** (Tirmidhi)

HADITH – II

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "عَلِّمُوا وَيَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَإِذَا غَضِبَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَسْكُتْ".

Ibn 'Abbas (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: **"Teach and make things easy and not difficult. When one of you is angry, he should be silent."** (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 245)

Introduction

Children are a gift from Almighty Allah to their parents and the wider society, and with this gift comes a huge responsibility. Islam does not only speak about the responsibility of parents and guardians towards their children, but it also gives ample guidance about the responsibilities of parents and society as a whole towards all children. All sectors of society should work in partnership to safeguard children from harm, and in order for this to happen children's rights ought to be recognised and maintained.

A lot of young people attend Masjids and Maktabas in South Africa throughout the week to learn about Islam and the Quran. It is therefore important that children who attend local Masjids and Maktabas are kept safe and are provided with the appropriate care and supervision that will enable them to learn and develop spiritually in all aspects of life.

As members of the society, we all have a duty to protect children and young people from harm. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "Allah Almighty will (on the Day of Reckoning) question each person in a position of responsibility about what he (she) was responsible for (in this life)".

The responsibilities of Masjid committees and the role of Maktabas in South Africa

It is imperative that faith organizations, such as Masjids and Maktabas, are equipped with the knowledge and awareness that will enable them to detect abuse and ill treatment of children. This child protection policy aims to be a reference for all members of staff and volunteers involved in Masjid and Maktab activities.

For organisations involved in working with children, it has become increasingly important for their management committees to make sure that they respond to the requirements and expectations of society and the law. Masjid and Maktab committees need to ensure that they have policies and procedures in place that look at the roles and responsibilities of people working with children, how to promote children's welfare, protect them from harm, respond to concerns and report to the statutory authorities.

These are some of the ways in which Masjid and Maktab committees can achieve this:

- By providing explicit and written guidance for all those working with children about their responsibilities and the standard of care expected of them, including behaviour management in the Maktab.
- Ensuring that everyone understands policies and good practice guidelines through training and safeguarding.
- Providing all necessary information to those working with children about child protection and the procedure to follow if someone raises a concern or makes an allegation.
- Ensuring that teachers are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, and that they know what to do about these concerns.
- Having a procedure for checking that teachers, staff members and committee members who are in contact with children have no recorded incident which would deem them unfit to teach. This would include an inquiry to establish if the individual's name is included in Part B of the National Child Protection Register (Regulation 50 (1) (b)) [Section 126(3) of the children's act, (No 38 of 2005)]
- Developing a clear framework for behaviour management in the Masjids and Maktabas.

The safety and welfare of children is paramount, and these measures seek to provide the framework to deliver this. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children and keep them safe.

Simplistically this is done by following the 4 R's:

- **Recognise** – unmet needs, abuse and harm
- **Respond** – alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Children's Services
- **Record** – ensure records are kept up-to-date and secure
- **Refer** – share information and refer to external agencies to safeguarding and protect children from harm

Parents trust the Masjid and/or Maktab administrators for the education and welfare of their children during their time in the Masjid or Maktab. This responsibility covers many aspects of the child's development and education. This policy therefore covers both activities within the Masjid and the Maktab.

Policy Statements and Principles

Child Protection Statement

We recognise our faith-based, moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Where it is believed that a child is at risk of or is suffering significant harm, the Masjid and Maktab will follow the procedures set out in this policy.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- The Masjid or Maktab's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- Safer children make more successful learners.
- Representatives of the Masjid or Maktab's community of children, parents, staff and trustees will be allowed to be involved in policy development and review.
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually.

Mission

To safeguard the welfare of all children and members by protecting them from physical, sexual, verbal or emotional harm, or the neglect that allows such harm to occur.

Accordingly, we are committed to:

- Recognising the culture and gender diversity of the children.
- Taking into account in all its considerations and activities the interests and well-being of young people.
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working.
- Taking all reasonable practical steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- Protecting the welfare of the children and their protection within a relationship of trust, in accordance with and within the principles of South African law.

Aims

The aims of the Child Protection Policy are to:

- Provide clear guidelines to prevent harm.

- Provide clear guidelines to follow in the event of abuse.
- Ensure that this policy is accessible and can realistically be implemented.
- Provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- Ensure consistent good practice.
- Demonstrate the Masjid and Maktab's commitment with regard to child protection to children, parents and other partners.
- Contribute to the Masjid and Maktab safeguarding portfolio.

Prevention: We are committed to early help and identification of unmet needs and vulnerabilities. We shall work in partnership with other agencies to promote the welfare of learners and keep children safe.

Protection: All staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond to abuse and neglect. All staff and volunteers are expected to be vigilant and must act quickly when they suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer.

Support: We acknowledge the sensitivity and complex nature of safeguarding and child protection and therefore ensure that children, staff and families are supported appropriately.

We recognise that effective safeguarding systems are those which:

- Put the child's needs first.
- Provide children with a voice.
- Promote identification of early help.
- Encourage multi-agency working and sharing of information.

Framework

Our primary aim is to ensure that our children are protected from harm, and encourage adult members to protect the children in their care. Masjids and Maktab operate within a social context: we are part of society. Dealing with suspected abuse involving members will involve other agencies. This can include Child Protection Agencies, Victim Support Organisations, the South African Police Services and the Department of Social Development.

The Children's Act & Regulations Act 38 of 2005 110 (1)

Any correctional official, dentist, homeopath, immigration officer, labour inspector, legal practitioner, medical practitioner, midwife, **minister of religion**, nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, **religious leader**, social service professional, social worker, speech therapist, **teacher**, traditional health practitioner, traditional leader or member of staff or volunteer worker at a partial care facility, drop-in centre or child and youth care centre who, on reasonable grounds concludes that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury, sexually abused or deliberately neglected, must report that conclusion in the prescribed form to a designated child protection organisation, the provincial department of social development or a police official.

The Masjid and Maktab will not conduct investigations, but will co-operate with the proper authorities. The Masjid and Maktab will provide necessary support to members and the community.

The Child Protection Policy applies throughout the Masjid and Maktab activities including events such as meetings, camps, day outings and training courses.

The Rights of the Child

- I have the right not to be hurt.
- I have the right to be protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm.
- I have the right to speak and to be taken seriously, and I have the responsibility to tell the truth.

- I have the right to be treated equally no matter my race, gender, language, and I have the responsibility to treat others equally.
- I have the right to privacy, and the responsibility to respect the privacy of others.
- I have the right to be protected from cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, and I should not use substances that will harm me.
- I have the right to proper care and the responsibility to be the best person that I can be.

Responsibilities of adults within the Child Protection Policy

All adults within the Masjid and Maktab will have the responsibility to ensure that:

- Their behaviour is appropriate at all times around children.
- They observe the rules established for the safety and security of children.
- They follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.
- They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
- In every respect, the relationships they form with the children under their care are appropriate.
- They must have children's safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibility which is updated at least every 3 years (except Designated Leads).
- They should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect.
- They should be aware of how to respond to specific safeguarding concerns as outlined in this policy.
- They have a responsibility to identify those children who may require early intervention support, and what action to take to ensure they are supported appropriately.
- They have a responsibility to identify and respond to a child who is or likely to suffer significant harm and what action they must take, appropriate to their role.
- They must be aware of the importance of multi-agency partnership working and information sharing processes.

The trustees and committee must ensure that:

- The Masjid and or Maktab complies with their duties under child protection.
- All staff have read through the child protection policy.
- The Masjid and or Maktab contributes to multi and inter-agency working.
- There is a child protection policy and procedures, reviewed and updated annually and made available to parents upon request.
- There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Head Teacher and a nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) person.
- They appoint a member of staff or committee from the senior leadership team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- There are procedures in place to handle allegations of abuse of children against other children.
- The child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback.

The Head Teacher

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff.
- Allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DSL and deputy to carry out their roles effectively.
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

All Masjids and Maktabas should have a nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead to act on their behalf when there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse.

Managing referrals: Refer cases of abuse or suspected abuse;

- To a Social Worker from a child protection service organisation.
- To a Social Worker from the Department of Social Development.
- To the Child Protection Officer of the South African Police Services.

The head teacher must be informed of these issues, especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations.

Training: The DSL should receive appropriate training in order to:

- Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the child protection policy and procedures, especially new staff and volunteers.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
- Familiarise themselves with the Form 22.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the Masjid and or Maktab may put in place to protect them.

Raising Awareness: The designated safeguarding lead should ensure Masjid and or Maktab policies are known and used appropriately:

- Ensure Masjid and or Maktab child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the senior leaders on this.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the Masjid and Maktab in this.

Good Practice Guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children we need to agree to standards of good practice. This expectation of good practice applies to all staff and members:

All staff, members and volunteers will:

- Treat all children with respect.
- Treat children as individuals.
- Put the child's welfare first.
- Set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involve children in decisions that affect them.
- Encourage positive and safe behaviour among children.
- Be a good listener.
- Be alert to changes in children's behaviour.

- Recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Read and understand the child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact and information-sharing.
- Ask the children's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing or administering first aid.
- Maintain appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Be aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Share concerns immediately with the DSL.
- Always act in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Members, staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with a child in a room. Should there be a need to speak with a child in private then a third person should be present in the back of the room.
- If necessary to touch, keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touching should be related to a child's needs not the workers.
- Touching should be age appropriate and generally be initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity, which is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child for example, fondling, touching private parts of the body.
- Workers should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

Rewards and Gifts

All staff are expected to:

- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared immediately.
- Generally, only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system.
- Where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of an insignificant value and given to all children equally.
- Ensure that the selection processes for gifts and rewards are fair, transparent and (wherever practicable) are undertaken by more than one member of staff.

Infatuations

All staff are expected to:

- Report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may be infatuated with a member of staff. This must be reported to the nominated DSL.

Social Contact

All staff are expected to:

- Advise a senior leader of any (unplanned) social contact they have with a child which might cause concern;
- Report and record any situation which they feel might compromise the Masjid and or Maktab or their own professional standing;

- Refrain from sending personal communication to children e.g. letters, cards, text messages or emails etc. unless agreed with a senior leader or management.

Photography, Videos and other Creative arts

All staff are expected to:

- Refrain from making any visual recordings of children (still or moving) without the prior consent of a senior leader and their parents.
- Ensure that the storage and distribution of such images is approved by senior leaders and care is taken to avoid illicit use of the images.
- Ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability;
- Be able to justify images of children in their possession.
- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations.
- Avoid taking images of children using your personal mobile phones.

Categories of child abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Children who do not fit the categories above may also be at risk of significant harm as they could, for example, be in a situation where another child in the household has been harmed or a person who may pose a risk to children may reside in that household.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

What to do if you suspect that abuse has occurred

Very few adults hurt children deliberately and usually when this occurs it is a sign that such families need help and support. We should support families where children may be at risk, first to refer the allegations to the authorities and then to look at what could be done to support and assist the family.

If a Masjid and or Maktab staff member feels that a child attending the Masjid and or Maktab is suffering abuse, they must pass this information on in order to ensure that the child is protected. The information should be passed on to the nominated DSL and the management committee.

If a Masjid and or Maktab staff member suspects that a child attending the Masjid and or Maktab has been hurt in any way, either by their family or by another person within the Masjid or Maktab, they have a clear responsibility to ensure that action is taken to protect that child. The information should be passed on to the nominated DSL and the management committee.

What to do if a child tells you about abuse:

- Listen attentively and let them know that they were right to tell someone about their worries.
- Stay calm and make sure that the child feels safe and knows that they are not to blame. React carefully and do not panic. Your role is to support and report not interrogate and investigate.
- Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse if it is to stop.
- Only ask questions that establish what was done and who did it. Never ask leading questions and never push for information.
- Make a note of what the child said and the date and time of the conversation. If you can write down what the child says, be as precise as you can be.
- Do not examine the child for signs of abuse.
- Do not allow personal doubt in preventing you from reporting the allegation.
- Do not act without talking to the nominated DSL to deal with child abuse.
- Seek advice before telling parents or carers about the conversation. You could be putting the child in greater danger by doing this.
- Do not investigate, but speak to the nominated DSL or a member of the management committee.

Recognising possible signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Neglect, under-nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc., which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse.
- Fear of going home to parents or carers.

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.

- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.
- Unaccounted for sources of money.
- Telling you about being asked to 'keep a secret' or dropping hints or clues about abuse.

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Allegations of physical abuse, neglect or emotional abuse

If a child attends Masjid and or Maktab and has a serious physical injury or symptoms of neglect or emotional abuse the nominated DSL should be informed. The parents or guardians of the child should normally be contacted and informed of the concerns raised unless by doing so the child would be placed in further danger. If this is the case, the local authorities should be contacted for advice and assistance.

The Nominated DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should:

Speak with the parent/guardian and suggest medical help/attention be sought for the child. If appropriate, the parent/guardian should be encouraged to seek help from the local authorities. With older children it is important to take their wishes and feelings into account with regard to speaking to their parents.

If the parent/guardian is unwilling to seek help, then it may be appropriate for the DSL from the Masjid and or Maktab to go with them. If they still fail to act and there is concern about the welfare of the child, the nominated DSL should refer the case to the Department of Social Development or a Child Protection Organisation.

Where a child needs emergency medical attention, all efforts must be made to contact the child's parents prior to treatment, but the health and safety of the child must come first. The nominated DSL should inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.

Consideration should always be given to referring the matter to the local authorities if there are concerns about the safety of a child. If the nominated DSL is unsure whether or not to refer a case to, then s/he can always contact them for advice or to discuss the case.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the nominated DSL should:

Contact the local child protection organisation and or the appointed social for their area from the Department of Social Development. The nominated DSL will not speak to the parent or anyone else directly, as there is always a possibility that they could be involved. If named people are innocent, talking to them before contacting the authorities may make it harder for them to be cleared.

If sexual abuse has occurred very recently, the nominated DSL should contact the police urgently so that any physical evidence is preserved. Do not interfere with any evidence such as stained clothing. If the allegations concern events more than a week old, then there is less urgency but either the Department of Social Development or Police must be informed promptly.

Under no circumstances must the nominated DSL or any Masjid and Maktab staff member attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The important thing is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Department of Social Development or Police. They will then investigate the matter further.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the nominated DSL, their absence should not delay referral to the Department of Social Development or Police.

There may be a disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the nominated DSL as to the appropriateness of the referral to the authorities. If so, the person who heard the allegation has a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Department of Social Development and the Police, and should do so without hesitation. We hope by making this statement that the Management Committee demonstrates the commitment of the Masjid and or Maktab to carry out effective child protection.

If the allegations or suspicions involve the nominated DSL, then a report should be made to the chair of the management committee who will contact the Department of Social Development and or the Police.

Allegations against people of authority within the Masjid and or Maktab

- If an allegation in any way implicates the nominated DSL, then a report should be made to the chair of the management committee.
- If an allegation implicates both the nominated DSL and the chair, then a report should be made to the Department of Social Development or the Police.
- If the allegation is one of assault by the Imam or any member of staff or management committee of the Masjid and or Maktab then the matter must be referred to the authorities.
- If an accusation is made against any staff member (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the nominated DSL in accordance with safe procedures will need to liaise with the management committee in regards to the immediate temporary relief of duties for that particular staff member until such time when it is safe for him/her to return or when the investigation has concluded and the staff member has been cleared of the allegation.

Declaration

1. This organisation believes that children must be protected from harm at all times.
2. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this, and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
3. We want children who use or have contact with this organisation to enjoy our service and to be safe at all times.
4. We want parents and guardians who use or attend our organisation to be supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child's health and well-being, and keeps them safe.
5. We will achieve this by adopting this child protection policy and refer to the Children's Act & Regulations (ACT 38 of 2005) for guidance.
6. If we discover or suspect a child is suffering harm we will follow this procedure and other guidance from the Department of Social Development and the Police.
7. This child protection policy and procedure will apply to all staff, volunteers and congregation, and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.
8. We will review our child protection policy and procedures at least annually to make sure they are still relevant and effective.

The Name of the Nominated DSL is:

DSL Signature.....Date.....

Chairman or Head Teacher Name:

Signature.....Date.....



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